

## **APPENDIX E**

### **AGENCY WILDLIFE MITIGATION PLAN**



September 7, 2007

## **Agency Wildlife Mitigation Plan for the West Tavaputs Plateau**

The Price Field Office, in coordination with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR), is giving careful consideration to BBC's and other operators' Wildlife Mitigation Plan, which outlines proposed mitigation for natural gas full field development on the West Tavaputs Plateau. The proposed plan is developed to mitigate potential effects specifically to wildlife resources that cannot be avoided or reduced. The agencies, however, in response to the operator proposed plan, are evaluating alternative combinations of measures with emphasis on compensatory means of mitigation.

The primary objective of the operators' plan is to address effects of development activities proposed to occur during seasonal closures, while the agencies alternative plan emphasizes the importance of offsetting, to the extent reasonable, the effects of the full field development in its entirety. The agencies plan gives priority to compensating for potential effects to greater sage grouse, deer, raptors, and elk.

Another key objective of the agencies plan carries forward the operators' commitment to mitigate at a 4:1 acre to acre ratio based on total potential long-term surface disturbance. This ratio generally serves as the limitation on the extent to which operators would be required to mitigate.

As is proposed by the operators, 30 percent of the total potential long-term surface disturbance would be mitigated during the first three years following a decision to authorize the full field development project. As part of this initial effort, the following measures\* would be implemented:

- Habitat improvement and connectivity as described in the operators' plan. This would be implemented at a 4:1 ratio as indicated above.
- Wet meadow/summer range enhancement as described in the operators' plan. Up to six projects would be implemented. Acres enhanced would be counted under the habitat improvement tally at an equal or greater acreage value based on the qualitative benefits of the enhancement
- The operators would contribute to UDWR for monitoring greater sage grouse, whether the continued telemetry study or other, more aggressive means of monitoring, if necessary, including experimental designs

The agency alternative mitigation plan would also establish an oversight committee to be led by the BLM, in coordination with UDWR, and other agencies. The mitigation oversight committee (MOC), consistent with the operators' plan, would evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of mitigation measures, provide direction on effective means of mitigating planned development activities, and develop adaptive strategies and projects to mitigate beyond the initial 30 percent commitment. The MOC would complete evaluations and make determinations on on-going and planned mitigation activities on an annual basis, in advance of considerations for winter activities (as is outlined under Alternatives C and E), and prepare a report on its findings.

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\* Some of the measures proposed by the operators not carried forward into the alternative wildlife mitigation plan are incorporated elsewhere in the alternative as general alternative components.

Adaptive strategies beyond the operators' initial commitment could include a broad menu of mitigation options. The relative value of the various options would be determined by the MOC such that their value can be applied toward the operators' 4:1 mitigation requirement.

Mitigation options which would be considered by the MOC for implementation of the plan include, but are not limited to, the following actions:

- Additional habitat improvement and connectivity projects. A variety of methods could be used, targeting a range of vegetative communities and habitats, including wet meadow/summer range
- Continued or more aggressive monitoring of greater sage grouse, including experimental designs
- Conversions of grazing allotments in and around Nine Mile Canyon from domestic sheep (this could provide for the reintroduction of big horn sheep into Nine Mile Canyon)
- The purchase of conservation easements on private lands
- Management of private lands for the benefit of wildlife

The MOC would recognize within the 4:1 parameter mitigation activities on Federal, State, and private lands, including those which build upon or complement past commitments by operators to mitigate activities authorized under previous analyses and associated decisions.